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NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER

REFERENCE: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENT TO L-3060
02 MAY 1967
PAGE 1

IRON AND STEEL COMBINE
THAI NGUYEN, NORTH VIETNAM
2133N 10552E
[REDACTED]

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1. SIGNIFICANCE:

THIS BRIEFING BOARD DEPICTS THE THAI NGUYEN IRON AND STEEL COMBINE AS OF MARCH 1966.

2. LOCATION:

THE IRON AND STEEL COMBINE IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY THREE NM SOUTH-SOUTHEAST OF THAI NGUYEN.

3. COLLATERAL:

THE COMPLEX IS AN INCOMPLETE COKE, IRON, AND STEEL COMPLEX WITH NINE FUNCTIONAL AREAS CONTAINING ORE SINTERING FACILITIES, ONE COKE OVEN BATTERY, A COKE BY PRODUCTS SECTION, THREE BLAST FURNACES, A TWO-STACK OPEN HEARTH FURNACE BUILDING, A ROLLING MILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION, A FABRICATION AREA, AND STORAGE/SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION AREAS. CONSTRUCTION WAS BEGUN ON THIS PLANT IN 1960 AND HAS CONTINUED UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME.¹

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH VIETNAM'S SMALL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY IS BEING FINANCED LARGELY BY COMMUNIST CHINA. UNDER AN AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE LATTER COUNTRY AND NORTH VIETNAM IN FEBRUARY 1959, A CHINESE CREDIT OF U.S. \$75 MILLION WAS TO BE USED TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, INCLUDING STARTING THE FIRST STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION AT THE THAI NGUYEN IRON AND STEEL PLANT. UNDER SUBSEQUENT CREDITS, WHICH WERE TO BE USED FROM 1961 TO 1967,

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OF 100,000 TONS OF CRUDE STEEL ANNUALLY AT THAI NGUYEN BY THE END OF 1965. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ESTIMATE THAT THE TOTAL INVESTMENT FOR THE ENTIRE COMPLEX WILL AMOUNT TO ABOUT U.S. \$160 MILLION.

UNDER THE CREDITS, CHINA HAS ALSO PROVIDED EXTENSIVE ASSISTANCE IN ENGINEERING AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE THAI NGUYEN COMPLEX AND HAS FURNISHED A LARGE NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS TO INSTALL EQUIPMENT, MANAGE OPERATIONS, AND TRAIN INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL. ALSO, NORTH VIETNAMESE OPERATING PERSONNEL ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN RECEIVING TRAINING IN CHINESE STEEL MILLS IN 1963-64.

THE PLANNED ANNUAL OUTPUT OF CRUDE STEEL FOR THE PLANT, PROBABLY TO BE PRODUCED IN SIDE-BLOWN CONVERTERS, IS APPROXIMATELY 100,000 TONS BY 1966 AND 200,000 TONS BY 1970. PRESS REPORTS CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF SMALL CHINESE PLANTS LATE IN THE 1950'S INDICATE THAT IF THAI NGUYEN IS EQUIPPED WITH SIDE-BLOWN CONVERTERS, THE CRUDE STEEL PRODUCED PROBABLY WILL BE BOTH RELATIVELY HIGH IN COST AND POOR IN QUALITY. SUFFICIENT CASTING AND ROLLING MILL CAPACITY IS PLANNED TO ALLOW CONVERSION OF CRUDE STEEL INTO USABLE FINISHED STEEL PRODUCTS INCLUDING WIRE, ROD, STRUCTURAL SHAPES, AND ULTIMATELY THE COMMUNISTS CLAIM, STEEL SHEET AND PIPE.²

4. BACKGROUND:

PHOTOGRAPHY OF MARCH 1964 REVEALED THE PLANT TO BE APPROXIMATELY FIFTY PERCENT COMPLETE. AS OF JULY 1965 THE COMPLEX APPEARED

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ESSENTIALLY COMPLETE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ROLLING MILL AND THE OPEN HEARTH FURNACE BUILDING. PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE BETWEEN JULY 1965 AND MARCH 1966 REVEALED THAT THE OPEN HEARTH FURNACE BUILDING WAS COMPLETE AND THAT A SMALL AMOUNT OF FURTHER CONSTRUCTION HAD TAKEN PLACE ON THE ROLLING MILL.

5. MISSION READOUT:

PRE-STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHY [REDACTED]

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REVEALS THE THAI NGUYEN IRON AND STEEL COMBINE TO BE CAPABLE OF LIMITED PRODUCTION, CONFINED CHIEFLY TO THE PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND THE FABRICATION OF FINISHED STEEL PRODUCTS INCLUDING POL STORAGE TANKS AND BRIDGE TRUSSES. NO STEEL PRODUCTION IS APPARENT ALTHOUGH AN OPEN HEARTH FURNACE BUILDING HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AND A PROBABLE ROLLING MILL IS OBSERVED UNDER CONSTRUCTION. POSSIBLE LIMITED COLD STEEL ROLLING AND FABRICATION ARE ACCOMPLISHED AT THE FOUNDRY AND FABRICATION AREAS OF THE COMBINE.

AT THIS TIME IDENTIFIED COMPONENTS OF THE COMBINE INCLUDE:

- A. A BLAST FURNACE AREA WITH STOCK TRESTLE AND THREE FURNACES.
- B. AN OPEN HEARTH AREA CONTAINING ONE LARGE OPEN HEARTH FURNACE BUILDING WITH TWO STACKS.
- C. A COAL AND ORE PREPARATION AREA CONTAINING A COAL PREPARATION BUILDING, COKING OVENS, A COKE BY-PRODUCTS PLANT AND AN ORE SINTERING PLANT.
- D. A STEAM PLANT WITH OVERHEAD PIPING, INCOMPLETE BUT CONNECTED

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TO THE BLAST FURNACE AREA AND THE OPEN HEARTH BUILDING.

E. A ROLLING MILL AND COMPRESSOR BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

F. A FABRICATION AND FOUNDRY AREA WITH THREE MONITOR-ROOF BUILDINGS AND EIGHT SMALLER SHOPS.

G. A FIRE BRICK PLANT WITH ONE LONG PRODUCTION BUILDING AND SEVERAL ASSOCIATED RAW MATERIAL TREATMENT BUILDINGS.

H. A RAIL CAR AND LOCOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP INCLUDING TWO MONITOR-ROOF BUILDINGS.

I. AN ADMINISTRATIVE AREA CONTAINING THREE MULTISTORY BUILDINGS AND SEVERAL ASSOCIATED SUPPORT BUILDINGS.

J. A WAREHOUSE AND TRANSSHIPMENT AREA AT THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE COMPLEX CONSISTING OF A TWENTY-FOUR TRACK RAIL YARD (THAI NGUYEN RAILROAD STATION YARDS AND SHOPS [REDACTED] TWENTY LARGE RAIL-SERVED WAREHOUSES, AND TWELVE SMALL STORAGE BUILDINGS.

K. A COAL/ORE STORAGE AREA WITH AN ASSOCIATED CONVEYOR SYSTEM CONNECTING WITH THE COAL AND ORE PROCESSING AND TREATMENT BUILDINGS.

L. A TERMINAL SUBSTATION CONNECTED TO THE THAI NGUYEN THERMAL POWER PLANT [REDACTED] APPROXIMATELY FIVE NM NORTHWEST OF THE COMBINE.

M. A WATER TREATMENT FACILITY WITH A PUMPHOUSE, SETTLING POND, AND WATER STORAGE TANK.

NUMEROUS MISCELLANEOUS SMALL STORAGE/SUPPORT/PROCESSING BUILDINGS

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ARE NOTED THROUGHOUT THE COMPLEX.

THE PLANT IS SERVED BY ROUTE 3 AND THE HA NOI/THAI NGUYEN RAIL LINE, AS WELL AS THE KEP/THAI NGUYEN RAIL LINE WHICH CONNECTS WITH THE HA NOI/PING-HSIANG RAIL LINE.

¹CIA. IAD PIR 65112, MAY 1966, (CONFIDENTIAL [REDACTED])

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²CIA/RR EM 64-34, OCTOBER 1964, (SECRET [REDACTED])

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21-33N 105-52E

